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# The Icelandic Canadian

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## EDITORIAL

The 75th anniversary of the arrival of the Icelanders in the Canadian West will be marked by a celebration to be held at Gimli, Man., on the 7th of August next.

The place is well chosen for it was at Gimli that a group of some 280 people landed in October 1875 to found our first permanent settlement in Canada. Gimli is thus the cradle of our race in the New World.

It is well that the memory of our early pioneers should be honored and the story of their deeds recorded and preserved for as true pioneers they have had few equals. The whole history of our people bears witness to this restless pioneering urge.

Within ten years of the founding of the Gimli settlement, the great majority of the original settlers had left and only continued immigration from Iceland kept the settlement going. Of those that left, some went to south west Manitoba and founded the Argyle colony, others went to North Dakota. Both these groups in turn helped to settle the Wynyard and Bredenbury districts in Saskatchewan and Markerville in Alberta. Still others pushed up along both shores of Lake Manitoba and later to Swan River and Winnipegosis. The story was always the same. As soon as a district came to be fully settled the Icelanders moved on and sought another homestead in some more sparsely settled and less accessible region. In some twenty-five years a few thousand people had spread into almost every nook and cranny of the west.

Two instances show well the attitude of the early pioneer. As early as 1886 a party of three travelled to the Qu'Appelle Valley in Saskatchewan. They found the land good but reported that this vast region was already becoming overcrowded.

In the early eighties another party of three went to Alaska to explore the possibilities of an Icelandic settlement. On their return they proposed to their countrymen that they should migrate en masse to that great land and there establish a new state where Icelandic would be the official language and where the glories of the old Icelandic Republic might be revived. Meetings were held in Winnipeg and articles written and emissaries despatched to the government of the United States. These negotiations came to naught. But the very idea that some two or three thousand destitute immigrants might hope to conquer that rugged country and there found a new state will long remain a source of wonder and a monument to the courage and vision of our people in that day.

Other instances will show that this spirit is yet with us. As settlers we can scarcely hold our own as abler and more devoted husbandmen move into our old agricultural settlements. As a result the last two decades have seen a steady drift of Icelandic pioneers from the established settlements. Many have gone into the cities but others have struck into the North. They will be found in the Eldorados and Yellow-knives of that region and around the

great lakes of the North West Territories wherever there is fish to be found or freight to be handled. Still others have gone to the salmon fisheries or the lumber camps of British Columbia.

It is not suggested that our people have a monopoly of the pioneering virtues. These are found in large measure among the peoples of all races. Bearing in mind our small numbers however, one may rightly feel that we have done our share of the pioneering tasks which this young country has demanded from its citizens. It is to be hoped that we will do our share of those that have yet to be done.

Of greater importance than the dis-

covery of new lands is the discovery of new truths but of equal importance is the preservation of old ones. In this last sphere our journal is a pioneer. We have been set the task, among others, of attempting to preserve whatever may be of value in our racial heritage through the medium of the English language.

This we are trying to do by making available to those who have already lost command of the Icelandic language those treasures contained in the history and literature of our race. That we have pioneered, not without success, in other fields gives us reason to hope that we will not fail. **H. Th.**

## *Salversons Aid Flood Fund Rally*

Mrs. Laura Goodman Salverson wrote the opening script for the most widely heard broadcast in all of Canada's radio history, which was given in Toronto's Maple Leaf Gardens, Friday, May 26, in aid of the Manitoba Flood Relief Fund.

All personnel gave their time free on this Red River Relief Rally, which otherwise would have cost about \$300,000 in time and talent fees, and which was heard over 752 radio stations and by an estimated 17,000 present at Maple Leaf Gardens.

Among the outstanding talent heard were George Formby, noted English comedian, who flew from Britain for the occasion, The Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Dr. Leslie Bell's Singers, Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians, and the Master of ceremonies was none other than Carman's own Jack Carson (born at Carman, Man.) who blew in from Hollywood about two minutes before air time, and kept the program constantly keyed up with a combination of script reading and smart ad-

libs. John Fisher, spoke briefly and Gisele (La Fleche) charming radio entertainer from Winnipeg, sang.

The opening piece, by Laura G. Salverson, who was in Toronto as a flood evacuee from Winnipeg, was "A word sketch from the flood front", and described graphically "the slow mass execution of beautiful homes . . . the low roofs like queer sampans adrift in a muddy current." It was movingly read by John Scott and set the key to the tone of the whole program.

Later in the program a powerful script written by Mrs. Salverson's son George, was dramatically delivered by John Drainie. The continuity for the show was written by George Salverson and it was produced by E. W. Ljungh, (they are both formerly of Winnipeg) and Jackie Rae.

It was a fine show, well written and ably held together, with nice performances which showed an abundance of good Canadian talent.

## ICELANDIC SETTLERS IN BRAZIL

By W. Kristjanson

Prior to the extensive emigration movement from Iceland to North America, in the last three decades of the nineteenth century, there was an incipient movement to Brazil, commencing in 1863. The reasons for leaving were the same in both instances, fundamentally economic. Only a few specific details will be mentioned. A crippling Danish trade monopoly had operated over a long period, and while restrictions had been greatly eased about 1800, the country took long to recover. The violent eruption of *Skaptárjökull* (The Shaft River Glacier), 1783-84, had caused appalling destruction of human lives, stock and land, some 9,000 people, as well as 190,000 sheep, 28,000 horses and 11,000 cattle perishing, according to estimates.

More recently, in 1856-60, a disease of epidemic proportions, and the excessively hard winter of 1858-59, had hit hard the all-important sheep industry of the country.

The psychological reactions to the two last mentioned disasters was all the more keen because just previously there had been a slight improvement in the general situation. This was true especially in *Píngeyjarsýsla*, one of the most progressive parts of the country, where the people had begun to improve methods of cultivation and had established a cooperative enterprise.

People began to think of emigration. Some spoke of Greenland, whither their stock and effects could most readily be transported. A meeting to discuss emigration most specifically the Greenland move, was called at *Einarsstöðum* in Reykjadal, in 1859.

Einar Asmundsson, from Nesi, in *Píngeyjarsýsla*, a man widely read and well-informed, had given much thought

to the plight of the country. He had read about South America, especially about Brazil, and he considered that country the most promising for Icelandic emigration. At the meeting in Reykjadal, he pointed out the folly of moving from one cold country to another still colder, and diverted the thoughts of the people to Brazil, which thereupon became the "promised land".

Einar Asmundsson followed up this development with a circular letter dated February 4, 1860, for the forming of an emigration association and inviting the signature of those who desired to emigrate to America. This letter with its nine articles constitutes the first attempt at organized emigration from Iceland.

There were not many signatures, but somewhere in this period the Brazilian Emigration Association was formed, with an original membership of about two hundred. Literature on Brazil was obtained, some of which was translated, and some of the translated material was published.

This Brazil project met with strong opposition in certain quarters, especially in official circles, and opprobrium was heaped on Asmundsson's head. Nevertheless, the movement got under way, and, in 1863, five men left for Brazil.

The first to go was Kristján (Guðmundsson) Ísfeld, who proceeded to Copenhagen, in 1861, with Brazil as his ultimate goal. Born in 1840, he was then twenty-one years of age. From Copenhagen, he set sail, February 14, 1863. Travelling via Kiel, Newcastle, and a Spanish port, he landed at Rio de Janeiro, after an ocean voyage of forty-four days, to behold "the glamorous city about which he had read in

Iceland and which he had long desired to see."<sup>1</sup>)

Isfeld took up permanent residence in Rio de Janeiro, which he found much to his liking. He was innkeeper for six years, and prospered in the business. His spare time he devoted to the study of architecture, and to the acquisition of languages, mastering in due course five, besides his native tongue. He then turned to carpenter work, more congenial to him. He became a successful contractor, and had several people in his employ. He was rated a good citizen of his adopted country, but he continued to follow events in Iceland with keen interest, and kept in close touch with literary developments there. He died from yellow fever in 1874.

The other four men from **Pingeyjar-sýsla**, Jón Einarsson; his son, Jón; Jónas Hallgrímsson, and Jónas Friðfinnsson, left Akureyri, for Brazil, July 11, 1863. Travelling via Copenhagen and Hamburg, they beheld the mountains of Brazil with palm trees on the skyline, October 14, and twelve days later they landed at Joinville, the chief port of the Province of Dona Francisca, which lies to the south of Rio de Janeiro.

The original intention was to settle in Rio Grande do Sul, the southernmost province of the country, but the party now learned that all land in the south where there was easy communication by lake or river, was settled and that where roads had not already been built, colonization was so costly an undertaking as to be feasible only for an organization with strong financial backing. It was therefore, decided to remain for the present in Dona Francisca.

The newcomers found that there were many Scandinavians and Germans in Dona Francisca, and these people

gave them a good reception. The fertility of the country amazed them, one crop or another being harvested every month in the year, but they found the summer heat excessive, and it affected their health, and there was much else amiss. However, after exploration in the highlands about Curityba, in the Province of Parana, where the elevation was some four thousand feet, they felt that for their part they could be satisfied with the prospect, and their letters home contained songs of praise about the beauty of the land. They realized, however, that conditions were not such as to favor the establishment of an Icelandic colony, and they gave both sides of the picture.

One hundred and fifty people in Iceland enrolled for emigration to Brazil, during the winter of 1864-65, and many more contemplated the move. Some went as far as to sell their lands, but, despite determined efforts, transportation could not be obtained, either that winter or the following summer. This served to but a temporary stop to attempts at Brazilian emigration.

In 1871, one of the Icelandic settlers in Brazil made it known that the government of that country offered free passage to prospective Icelandic immigrants, to Curityba. Many people were eager to avail themselves of this opportunity and two lists with some 150 names were forwarded to Brazil. By 1873, the waiting list numbered upward of six hundred, but still no ship arrived. However thirty-four people, men, women, and children, made their way in small groups to Denmark, where they were well received by the Brazilian consul, who secured their passage to Hamburg. This consul was blamed in Iceland for the non-arrival of the long-awaited emigrant ship, but from his own account it would appear that he received from the Brazilian Govern-

1) Þorsteinn Þ. Þorsteinsson: *Saga Íslandinga í Vesturheimi*, Vol. II, p. 76.



ment neither clear instructions nor the necessary funds for a large-scale movement.

The party of thirty-four dispatched to Hamburg encountered a virulent epidemic, similar to cholera, at the German port of Cuxhaven. Four died, and all the rest were taken more or less seriously ill. After a long and trying journey of more than a year, the group finally reached Curityba, Jan. 8, 1874.

After the fiasco of 1873, when so great a number of prospective emigrants found themselves stranded, homeless and destitute, the Icelandic promoters of the movement became so incensed that they withdrew their support. There is, however, on record a meeting of the Brazilian Emigration Association, in 1876. Interest was still keen, but plans did not materialize. The movement to North America had begun by then and many who attended this meeting went there instead.

As for the little Icelandic group in Brazil, they fared rather well, on the whole, and some became prosperous, but they felt very keenly the separation from their compatriots. A letter from one of the 1874 group tells the tale.

"There is little news of us compatriots here. We number only thirty, young and old, who arrived here together, at the beginning of 1874. Since then, we have dispersed far and wide in the Province, and two of the men have gone south to Argentina. Most of our single folk have married people of other nationalities, such as Germans, Danes, and Swedes. From this it may be seen just how long Icelandic nationality and language will survive here.

"All my fellow-countrymen are still living, as far as I know, and in tolerably good circumstances, but

no one has done much better than that.

"People's likes and dislikes differ, but the majority have adjusted themselves rather well. As for me, I suffer most from homesickness (*leiðindum*)."

The letters of the exiles frequently dwelt as much on speculation regarding matters in Iceland as on their own adventures, and struggle for existence. For a long time, the people held tenaciously to their nationality, but the tide of time and circumstances was strongly against them.

One of the party, Magnus Isfeld, brother of Kristján Isfeld, moved with his family to North America, in 1904, to the Icelandic settlement at Mozart, near Wynyard, Saskatchewan. In Brazil, he had been a manufacturer of bricks and tiles, on a large scale, and become the most prosperous of all the Icelandic group. His wife, Elin Jónsdóttir, was a school teacher in Brazil before marriage. The members of this family were outstanding linguists. Magnus Isfeld resembling in this respect, his brother, had command of several languages as do some of the older children. Mrs. Isfeld knew Portuguese and German as well as Icelandic.

Magnus Isfeld died in 1919, from the effects of the Spanish influenza, and Mrs. Isfeld died in 1937.

Only two of the original settlers in Brazil were still living in 1940.

Such in brief is the story of the Icelandic emigration to Brazil.

**References:** Þorsteinn Þ. Þorsteinsson: *Saga Íslendinga í Vesturheimi*, Vol. II, Columbia Press, Winnipeg, Man., 1943. *Almanak* O. S. Thorgeirsson, Winnipeg, 1902 and 1916. *Framfari*, Vol. II, No. 37, 1879-1880.

2) Magnús Isfeld: Letter published in *Framfari*, Vol. II, no. 37, January 24, 1880.



## *Word Picture Of The Flood In Winnipeg*

By Laura Goodman Salverson

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One thing can be said for disaster: when the incredible happens you stop fooling yourself. Hope no longer hamstrings common sense.

For weeks we told ourselves our house was safe on its high bank. Why the elevation was 32 feet! But this morning there was neither bank nor elevation. There was only angry grey water snaking up between the trees to chew on the road just beyond the new lawn.

So what does it feel like to find this hungry monster almost at the doorstep? Oddly enough it is a queer relief. Now we are done with waiting; sitting rooted at the radio, our only live link with a dying city since the telephone failed; done with watching the houses on the opposite bank, sinking day by day, deeper in the dirty water.

Now we must re-hoist furniture, bedding, clothes, etc., from already high lifts, into the attic. And there are bags to pack before we join the sad exodus from a once pleasant city. No other word serves to describe the fleeing thousands. In all Canadian history there has been no such mass evacuation. Thousands left greater Winnipeg today. By Saturday all of St. Vital, must be out of their houses now window deep in water. Beautiful Wildwood and Elm Park are wastelands of ruined homes; large sections of Fort Garry, Elmwood, Riverview and East Kildonan fell to the river when dikes, built at super-human cost, crumbled. St. Boniface is almost isolated from its twin city, all but one of the bridges now impassable.

Five of our great hospitals have been evacuated; all schools closed, all social activities suspended. Street cars oper-

ate in the downtown section in cooperation with buses which pick up passengers beyond flooded subways and washed out streets. Business is almost at a standstill, no theatres open.

These are cold facts. What do they mean in humans terms? They mean the sharp curtailment of all the simple things we took for granted. Unhampered travel, communication with friends, easy shopping. Security! Now the word has no significance. Hourly we are warned that even electric power may fail. For days there has been no furnace heat. Food is still plentiful but difficult to deliver. Baths are prohibited in hotels. In homes all waste of water is a threat to loaded sewers. The old slop jar is back in favor.

There are no dandys on our streets. Muddy, hip-booted men rush from one danger zone to another. Brave bedraggled women and girls toil at canteens and a hundred centres where food is gathered for dike workers and refugees. Of these we now have forty thousand in a city forced to evacuate its own people. Girl Guides and Boy Scouts render tireless service, running errands, directing traffic; offices and stores work on skeleton staffs to release men and women for flood duties.

Winnipeg is a battered, embattled city, with even worse blows to come, but its spirit is magnificent; and her battle is magnificently directed by Brig. Gen. R. E. A. Morton.

For this we are grateful, but perhaps no service has bolstered morale so ably as the radio stations whose personnel worked round the clock. CJOB in particular has rendered every kind of service even patient, kindly messages and re-

porting. These things were done under handicap. When water crept up to the transmitter it was hoisted to the roof where it sits, a mechanical refugee under a cozy tent.

Many business houses and stores, crippled by water, keep open all night to deal with emergency demands. Restaurants that are still open, not only feed extra hundreds but some donate hot food to the dike workers. All churches have joined in helping. Unworldly Hutterites work beside worldly office girls on soggy dikes and sand piles. A Baptist minister is in charge of defence work at threatened St. Boniface, Roman Catholic Cathedral. The labours of the Red Cross and the Salvation Army need no mention; they are always front line troops.

It is the upsurge of civilian goodwill that is notable. The helpfulness of people rivals the flood in its steady outpouring. There has been so much generosity shown that it swamps to nothing the occasional looting and disorder. This is a good old town, still true to the traditions of the friendly west. that helps those of us who face loss and destruction. Yes, it helps to think of the thousands of men who worked on the long East Kildonan dike in beastly weather against impossible odds. These odds brought defeat finally but on a heroic note. When warning came that a leak had occurred, men sprang to the top of the dike on either side of the break. Lying down on the wet rampart, a living chain, holding fast to one another by one hand, they

tried to stop the leak by flinging sand bags into the yawning gap. But the force of the pushing water tossed five hundred sandbags a distance of forty feet! Only then did the men give up the gruelling battle to save three hundred lovely homes on a lovely river street.

There has been humor also at Kildonan dike. A buxom matron carrying a tray of sandwiches was seen to stagger, one silk-stockinged leg lifted in sportive cancan. A soldier grabbed the leg, guiding the foot back to the boot where it belonged. Nothing happened. The lady was stuck. It took two more able-bodied men to rescue lady, boots, and sandwiches from the clutches of Manitoba gumbo. This victory brought instant cheers.

There are other cheery things in our soggy city. In the next block an old man of seventy-five dug his garden today, his sturdy back turned to the swollen river. And, while the river crept towards our front lawn, my optimistic husband pumped out the back garden.

Meanwhile I packed our bags, made coffee and baked a cake. A special cake, please note; for the power that heats my stove is the gift of twelve thousand men who have worked day and night to protect the city and its power stations. I shall remember that as I eat the last cake in this house. For tomorrow I must leave this little place just spring cleaned last week. Oh, well, Old Man River cannot say he got a dirty welcome.

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## *Stefan Einarsson's Book On Icelandic Grammar*

By W. J. Lindal

The statement by the publishers of this book that it is "the most complete grammar and all around study text of the Icelandic language", is fully warranted and within the facts. The book was written during the last war and had an emergent need to fill during the occupation of Iceland as well as a purpose of long range for the future. The author thought that the book would be used "chiefly by two classes of people: (1) by soldiers or others actually in Iceland, and (2) by linguistic students in this country and elsewhere, especially teachers who are also interested in Old Norse-Icelandic." The author had mainly the first purpose in mind when he prepared the selections for "Daglegt líf og daglegt tal (Everyday Life and Colloquial Speech)".

The emergency is gone and the book is now fulfilling its second purpose. The fact that it is in its second edition proves its inherent worth and indicates that it is supplying a real need, which in turn shows an increasing interest in this present day Old Norse language. The book, however, as stated by the author, is for "the linguistic student", be he a professor in languages, a graduate specializing in Old English or a linguist interested in the language for its own sake.

The book may conveniently be discussed under five headings: pronunciation, inflexions, syntax, exercises in grammar, the glossary.

### PRONUNCIATION

The author devotes thirty pages to pronunciation—a most exhaustive and minute analysis of the pronunciation of modern Icelandic. It is really a

study, by itself, of the physical mechanics of speech. This exposition will prove to be of inestimable value to men such as Professor Einar I. Haugen and others who desire to master the living spoken language but who do not come in contact with Icelanders to whom the language is still the mother tongue. But the wisdom of introducing a book on grammar by such a comprehensive study of phonetics may be doubtful. It might act as a deterrent rather than an encouragement. One would have thought that if the author had followed the International Phonetic Alphabet with a minimum of modification a practical purpose would have been served even though at the sacrifice of some of the refinements of pronunciation of the Icelandic language.

### INFLEXIONS

The Part on Inflexions follows the general pattern but is much more thorough and comprehensive than that of Snæbjörn Jónsson. Nouns and verbs are divided into appropriate classes. There is a review of case endings in which eighteen special characteristics of Icelandic noun flexions are enumerated and briefly discussed. This is followed by a synopsis of noun declensions. There similarly is an analysis of the flexions of verbs, under eight headings, followed by complete paradigms of strong and weak verbs. The seventy-three pages of inflexions reveal a thorough knowledge and a careful analysis of the inflexional structure of this classic language.

### SYNTAX

Part III of the grammar, in which the syntax of Icelandic is discussed,

puts this book in a class by itself among books on the subject, not only in English, but, as far as the writer knows, in any language. The best Icelandic text is "Íslenzk setningafræði" by Jakob Jóh. Smári. (1920).

Frederick Bodmer, the distinguished Swiss philologist, published in 1944 a remarkable book on language, its origins and growth which he calls "The Loom of Language". In that book he categorically makes the statement that syntax is the most important part of grammar. Yet, until the publication by Stefán Einarsson of seventy six pages on the syntactical rules and characteristics of Icelandic, hardly anything had been published in English on this essential in the study of Icelandic, or, indeed, in the study of any language. With the exception of one page on the subjunctive mood, Snæbjörn Jónsson is silent on syntax. This treatise on Icelandic syntax is most timely and of special value for an other reason. When it is borne in mind that Icelandic is at once a highly flexional ancient language and a present day living language with its full quota of particles and helper verbs the value of a knowledge of its syntax as a foundation for language study becomes quite obvious. Old Icelandic, Hebrew, Latin and Greek reveal the natural, spontaneous development of language as distinct from the man-made instruments of more modern times. Present day Icelandic has both.

The four cases of nouns, nominative, accusative, dative and genitive, are well covered, particularly the uses of the dative and the genitive without prepositions. Such explanations are of great value to the person who has studied only English with its lack of flexions and consequent prolific use of prepositional phrases.

Most of the text on syntax is, of

course, devoted to the verb and the functions of tense, mood and voice. The uses of the indicative mood in the various tenses are well explained and require no comment. The discussion of the verb to be, "að vera", with intransitive verbs of motion and in duration action and the special use of the verbs "fara að" and "vera búinn að" denoting a beginning and a completed action respectively, is very appropriate. These are good examples of the relatively modern use of helper verbs.

But Stefán Einarsson excels in the analysis of the uses of the subjunctive in Icelandic. These are many, of various kinds, and provide shades of meaning which one can feel rather than coldly grasp through the usual meaning of the words. This is particularly true in cases where a person may, as a matter of grammar, use either the subjunctive or the indicative mood. The subjunctive is most commonly used in subordinate clauses commencing with "að", so much indeed, that there is a tendency on the part of some writers to use the subjunctive almost exclusively in such sentences, with a resulting loss of precision. Stefán is careful to point out:

"When, however, the 'að' clause states a fact, not a supposition, the indicative is used."

The author gives illustrations of five different kinds of "að" clauses and the "að" clause in turn is only one of seven types of subordinate clauses which take the subjunctive. This shows how thoroughly he has explored the wide field covered by the subjunctive and is typical of his penetrating analysis of the syntactical structure of the Icelandic language.

The only criticism that could be made of Part III of the book is that it is too brief and concise. But within the limits of seventy-five pages it would



have been impossible to cover in detail the whole field of syntax of a highly inflexional language such as Icelandic. The wonder is not that something was discussed too briefly or even missed, but that so much was included and most of it adequately covered.

The discussion of the middle voice is quite fragmentary—only three pages. The middle voice is used very extensively in Icelandic and in that respect, as in some others, Greek and Icelandic have much in common. The author might have given some illustrations of the flexibility of Icelandic in the use of the middle voice. There may be a change in meaning: "Hann fór", he went; "hann fórst", he perished. The middle voice governs different cases. There is the beautiful but simple sentence structure of the middle voice followed by the accusative: "Hann hræddist eldinn", he was afraid of the fire. The middle voice verb may take the dative: "Þeim buðust menn til fylgdar", some men offered to accompany them; or the genitive: "að hefjast handa", to lift or raise the hands, meaning to commence some work or undertaking.

The author draws attention to the limitation of the use of the passive voice in Icelandic because of the lack of a facile preposition such as "by" in English. He says:—

"Active: 'Jón tók bókina' John took the book.

"Passive: 'Bókin var tekin af Jóni' the book was taken by John (this is ambiguous, since 'taka af' also means: 'take from')."

In discussing participles Stefán points out that the past participle of both strong and weak verbs is declined as an adjective and hence is either strong or weak according to the flexion rule for adjectives. For clarity an illu-

stration might have been given such as:—

Hann fékk svar frá mörgum "boðnum" gestum. He received a reply from many of the invited guests.

Hann fékk svar frá þessum (demonstrative) "boðnu" gestum. He received a reply from these invited guests.

The author discusses, but all too briefly, the grammatical construction, so rare in modern languages, in which a noun in a subordinate clause is the subject of a verb in the infinitive. He mentions the accusative with the infinitive and the infinitive in indirect speech. In Icelandic, however, there are four types of these subordinate clauses and the subject of the infinitive may be either in the nominative or the accusative case.

1. A transitive verb in the active voice followed by the accusative with the infinitive: "Ég álit hana vera vel menntaða" or "Hann kvað tímann vera nauman."

2. An intransitive verb in the impersonal followed by the nominative with the infinitive: "Mér þykir hún vera nokkuð fín" or "Mér þykir það (vera) dýrt".

3. A transitive verb in the middle voice followed by the nominative with the infinitive: "Mér finnst hún vera góð í skapi" or "Mér sýndist hann (vera að) koma."

4. A verb in the middle voice followed by a nominative (implied in Icelandic, implied or express in Greek) with the infinitive: "Hann segist vera svangur" or "Hann þóttist vera reiður".

The student who knows only English may find the corresponding constructions in Latin and Greek a little difficult. But if he knew Icelandic he would find them very easy, in fact, just as easy as the ordinary rules of grammar in modern languages.



Frederick Bodmer lays down two rules for the study of a language. The first one applies with special force to Icelandic. It is as follows:

"(1) Get a 'bird's-eye view' of the grammatical peculiarities of a language before trying to memorize anything."

What Bodmer really had in mind was the syntactical structure of a language. The writer's hope is that public demand will make a third edition of Stefán's book necessary and that in it he will expand and enlarge his very excellent treatise on the syntax of Icelandic.

### EXERCISES IN GRAMMAR

In his instructions on how to use the book Stefán Einarsson indicates that he is a little afraid that the exercises may be too hard for the average student. He also admits quite frankly that the task of writing exercises "is not an easy one in a language as complicated in structure as the Icelandic". The writer is inclined to agree on both points, particularly the latter. The main problem in deciding upon the type of exercises that should be devised, arises through the fact that Icelandic is a flexional classic of granite conciseness and a modern language with a velvety, music-sounding flow of words. Because of the inflexions there is a need of constant grammatical drill; because of the beauty of the spoken tongue there is an equal need of practice in every day conversation. This is particularly true in the case of people in America of Icelandic extraction who desire to be able to speak Icelandic as well as to acquire a book knowledge of it. For that reason the writer suggests that the exercises should include "incoherent sentences" as well as "connected colloquial prose", to quote the author's own words. Snæbjörn Jónsson's sentence exercises should not have been entirely discarded. Professor Einar I. Haugen's "Be-

ginning Norwegian", as well as some of the more modern texts on the grammar of other languages, contain types of exercises which might be considered.

### THE GLOSSARY

The glossary is a masterpiece. It combines the best dictionary and grammar practices that have come to the writer's attention, and in some respects breaks new ground. The author says that the glossary "is designed to help the beginner as much as possible to find and learn the grammatical form and syntactical construction." In that he has been highly successful. The special feature of the glossary is the reference back to the grammar. This will be of great assistance to students and indeed to many people, including the writer, who have some knowledge of the language but who do not have sufficient practice in speaking Icelandic to be able "to feel" what is the correct ending or proper usage. An illustration may be given. Suppose a person wanted to use the feminine, dative, singular of the adjective "lítill", little, and did not know whether he should say "lítlri stúlku" or "lítilli stúlku". All he has to do is to look up the word "lítill" in the glossary. In the copious explanations he will find the notation "In. III 2 (a) 8". The notations appear on the top of the pages in the grammar and this particular one will be found to refer to the paradigm of the strong declension of the adjective "mikill". The feminine dative singular is "mikilli". Hence the correct words are "lítilli stúlku".

The writer ventures to say that most Vestur-Íslendingar, who commonly converse in English, will find this glossary of great assistance when writing or speaking in Icelandic. It may be left to the reader to form his own idea of the tremendous amount of work involved

in the preparation of this "direct reference to the grammar" in a glossary of two hundred and five pages. But, as the whole book so clearly demonstrates, thoroughness and painstaking effort are distinguishing marks of the author, not to mention his other qualities of mind.

This article is much longer than what had been anticipated or intended. Two justifications are offered. One is the hope that it might encourage the author to continue his study which in many ways is pioneering work of a high order. The other is that somebody should take advantage of the opportunity, which a review of this book affords, of drawing the attention of people to the assistance which a knowledge of Icelandic grammar will give to the linguistic student. It may become very appropriate and timely to point this out when the Chair in Icelandic Language

and Literature has been established in the University of Manitoba.

The writer has one suggestion to make. The present book may be "above the heads" of many who will seek to take a course in elementary Icelandic or who may want to study the language in their homes or in local community classes. The suggestion is made, though with considerable diffidence, and without intending to discount to the slightest extent the great contribution that Stefán Einarsson has already made, that he or some one should produce a text, at a slightly lower level, designed for both academic and extramural study. It should in particular be prepared for Vestur-Íslendingar, who will not only choose to study Icelandic instead of another foreign language, for its own inherent worth, but who will want to be able to speak it as their second language.

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## Dr. and Mrs. K. I. Johnson Honored

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More than 400 people gathered at a farewell party for Dr. and Mrs. K. I. Johnson held at the Parish Hall, Gimli, at the beginning of May, when they were leaving to take up residence at Pine Falls, Manitoba, where Dr. Johnson has a new appointment as resident physician.

Dr. Johnson has been the hospital doctor at the Johnson Memorial Hospital at Gimli for the last ten years and during that time both he and Mrs. Johnson have taken a very able part in community activities.

Dr. Johnson has held office in almost every organization in town, and at the time of his departure he was president of the Kinsmen Club, chairman of the School Board, treasurer of the skating rink committee and vice-president of

the Icelandic Celebration Committee which this year is sponsoring the 75th anniversary of the Icelandic settlement in New Iceland.

He is also a past master of Lisgar Masonic Lodge in Selkirk. Mrs. Johnson was active in the Women's Institute and the Ladies' Curling Club, and other local organizations.

A presentation was made to the guests of honor, and there was a program of speeches, choir numbers and community singing.

Dr. Johnson, a graduate of the University of Manitoba, is the son of Einar Johnson, of Winnipeg, and the late Oddfridur Johnson (formerly of Lundar, Man.), and a brother of the late B. E. Johnson. Mrs. Johnson is a daughter of Hon. and Mrs. William Morton.

## *Adventures Of The Artistic Mind*

By Holmfridur Danielson



**Sumarlidi Swanson**



Prize-winning pastel portrait of Mrs. Olive Swanson, Long Beach art leader, painted by Gertrude Orde, Los Angeles artist.

One can imagine Mr. and Mrs. Sumi Swanson of Long Beach, Calif., heaving a happy sigh of relief at the end of the long evening March 31, when they had brought to a successful conclusion their monster 'benefit' for Stafholt, the Old Folks' Home at Blaine, Wash.

It was in November, last, that Mr. and Mrs. Swanson sent out invitations to interested Icelanders in the Coast area, to attend a meeting at their home to launch this project. Due to their enthusiasm and exceptional organizational ability, and the grand support of all those who came in contact with the undertaking, it turned out to be the most popular event ever sponsored by Icelanders in California.

About five hundred persons flocked to the Free Mason's Hall, on the corner of Oak and Washington, March 31, to enjoy the varied attractions which consisted of a Tombola, bazaar,

carnival, "country store", musical entertainment, and of course refreshments, which a large group of local women capably took charge of. The grand prize of the evening was a Hoffman Television set donated by Mr. and Mrs. Swanson. There were many other valuable prizes, among them being a painting by Jon Thorbergson and a statuette by Nina Sæmundson. The net proceeds which added handsomely to Stafholt's budget, were \$1349.26.

It is, of course, nothing new for Olive and Sumarlidi Swanson to take charge of far-reaching cultural and community projects; and what is perhaps more important, they have the creative talent coupled with the patience, good judgment and leadership qualities which inevitably results in the projects being successfully carried out! These executive qualities are not always to be found in persons with profound artistic temperaments, which both of

them are richly endowed with in addition.

Mrs. Swanson has been president of the Long Beach Art Association for two years, (1942 —43); Art chairman for the Ass'n; National Art Week chairman; and Art Adviser to the special Float Committee in charge of the Long Beach city float "Victory, Unity and Peace", which won the Sweepstakes prize in the 1946 Pasadena Tournament of Roses. Her cultural achievements in connection with these and other projects and community activities would fill a book.

Sumarlidi Swanson (Sveinsson) who came from Iceland at the age of 20, not knowing a word in English, has won oratorical contests in competition with representatives from several large cities along the Coast. He is a recognized authority on real estate problems; much in demand as a speaker on various business and community building aspects, and has given innumerable lectures on Iceland to a long list of business and cultural clubs.

Olive Swanson is the daughter of the late Gunnar Julius and Ingibjörg (Olafsdóttir) Gudmundson, who came from Iceland to N. Dakota and later to Winnipeg. There, in 1915, she married Sumarlidi, who had come from Iceland in 1913. They moved to San Francisco in 1918, have now lived for 20 years in Long Beach where Mr. Swanson is engaged in Real Estate, and in this large and cosmopolitan city they are recognized as outstanding contributors to its artistic, cultural and business life.

"As long as I can remember I have had the urge to study Art and have always been more or less of a student in that line," says Mrs. Swanson in our interesting correspondence 'interview', "But I considered my first duty to be

to my home and children and so it was not until I had reared my family that I started looking for a teacher. I found a little lady who taught in the Adult Education classes, whom I studied with for a while. She invited me to attend a meeting of the Long Beach Art Ass'n, that was in 1941. In 1942 I was elected president, and served for two years". The Art Ass'n Inc. was organized in 1924, and has a list of officers and standing committees long enough to fill a small booklet, but it evidently did not take the members a long time to recognize the exceptional executive ability and artistic judgment of Olive Swanson.

That their faith in her was justified may be seen from the outstanding activities launched by the club while she was president, and several of those cultural projects are still aided to a large extent by her guidance as chairman of various committees.

In her inaugural address in 1942, Mrs. Swanson outlined her objectives for the Ass'n saying that she, — "saw in Art an antidote for the horrors of the present conflict". She pledged her organization to encourage local artists in every possible way. During her term of office the Art Ass'n organized and sponsored an art class where leading artists gave instruction, "and that is where I got my most valuable lessons", says Mrs. Swanson. "However, I was in charge of these classes most of the time so I did not have much time to devote to my own painting".

The Ass'n, at this time, also started a scholarship fund which enables an outstanding student to study for one year in an Art Institute, where he has a chance to compete for further scholarships. Mrs. Swanson also induced the Long Beach authorities to release some city property where the Art Ass'n could hold travelling Art Exhibitions



all the year, changing the show once a month. She has personally been in charge of these and has had the responsibility of co-ordinating the shows and arranging for transportation, publicity and hanging the pictures. She has been instrumental in getting many of the best travelling exhibits to Long Beach and the showing has proved immensely successful.

During the 1945 Travelling Exhibition, held at the Arcade of the Jergins Trust Building, the local papers spoke in glowing terms of Mrs. Swanson's exemplary work in this sphere:

"Much of the success of the Long Beach Art Association is due to the enthusiasm and tireless energy of Mrs. Sumi Swanson, with whom we had a moments chat while she was supervising the hanging of the exhibit" said the Press-Telegram and Long Beach Sun. "Both of us expressed the regret that Long Beach did not have an art gallery worthy of the name, but we did admit that the Arcade did have its compensations.

"Mrs. Swanson pointed out that of the hundreds of persons who passed through the Arcade, there were many who rarely, if ever, visited an art gallery, but under these circumstances they were being "exposed" to good art. And, of course art appreciation is developed by coming in contact with good art, whether it be painting, music of literature . . . . After all, it is desirable to make art appreciation universal, and we feel that the exhibits in the Arcade are doing more to popularize fine art than some exclusive showing in an exclusive gallery."

Lest anyone should think that Mrs. Swanson advocated this type of art shows as a permanent arrangement, we hurry to assure our readers that she campaigned strenuously to arouse public sentiment to the need for a

permanent Art Gallery to meet the needs of Long Beach. As the initial step in raising funds for this project, she inaugurated the Beaux Arts Ball, which has since become an annual event of the Art Ass'n, and one of the leading social functions of the city, receiving in the local papers a full page spread of colored pictures and announcements. Each year pictures of Mrs. Swanson along with other members of the committee are prominently displayed and in 1946 Mr. and Mrs. Swanson were featured in their gay-nineties costume for which they won second prize. On that occasion 22 pictures by local artists were given away as prizes.

During National Art Week in November each year paintings by prominent artists are displayed in downtown windows in Long Beach and various artists have informal open house affairs during which art lovers may visit studios and examine pictures. Mrs. Swanson who has more than once been L. B. chairman for National Art Week, and in charge of arranging the pictures, has received for this work a fine tribute from The American Artists' Professional League (Calif. Chapter) written by Thorwald Probst, chairman, California Chapter.

Says Mr. Probst in part:

Dear Mrs. Swanson:

It is my pleasure, as Chairman of the State Chapter of the American Artists' Professional League, to inform you that our National Headquarters at New York has advised me that California recieved first honors for excellent Art Week participation in 1946. I wish to extend to you the commendation of this organization for the splendid service you rendered in the observation of Art Week, and which aided in making this award possible."

Mr. Probst informs Mrs. Swanson



that at a meeting of the Board of Directors a resolution was unanimously passed to commend her for "the work you so graciously accomplished".

Great honors have come to Olive Swanson through her work in the sphere of Art. Astounding honors, we might say, when we consider that she so recently took up the study, and is mainly self-taught. It must have been very gratifying for her to be asked in 1946 to serve as Art Adviser to the committee in charge of the Long Beach Float for the Pasadena Tournament of Roses. The very best professional and artistic efforts of all the cities along the Coast go into the making of these famous floats. And what must have been her joy and pride when 'her' float won the Sweepstakes, the highest prize offered at the Tournament of Roses. On the 1946 Tournament of Roses Sweepstakes Award Program, her name appears in prominent letters along with those others who were responsible for the building and planning of the float, and she has a gracious letter of thanks from James A. Lynch, the president of the Long Beach Associates Inc. sponsoring the float.

"At a recent meeting of the Board of Directors of the Long Beach Associates, I was directed to write and thank you for your very valuable assistance in connection with the Long Beach float which appeared in the Pasadena Tournament of Roses. The members of the Board feel that your recommendations were of tremendous importance and were reflected in the winning of the over-all trophy by Long Beach.

"Please be assured of our unanimous opinion in this matter, and I hope that we may have your assistance for the next Tournament of Roses, in the

event the Associates are requested to handle the project. . . ."

"With kindest regards from all the members, we beg to remain

Yours very sincerely,

(signed) Jas. A. Lynch.

Not all Mrs. Swanson's energies are devoted to serving Art, as she has served ably on many large civic committees, where women of Long Beach have campaigned for civic improvements. But it is her artistic achievements which particularly stand out. She has attained considerable status as an interior decorator, having restyled several homes, including her own. In a full page newspaper article, replete with elegant pictures, the reporter refers to Mrs. Swanson's treatment of the Swanson home as an 'inspiration to other home owners'. "Mrs. Swanson has more than talent", says this reporter, "She has the determination and the foresight to see beyond the drab walls overladen with ugly built-ins". Mrs. Swanson says that remodelling can be more costly than a new house unless one adheres to a strict budget, and so she did a great deal of the work herself. With ingenuity and a few deft touches she transformed many of the undesirable features, rather than going to the expense of having them removed. She made and hung all window treatments in the house, hung some of her own paintings to off-set various groupings of furniture, and out of an old ornate picture fram she made a smart shadow box for knick-knacks. One of her exquisite, delicately colored ballerina paintings, in antique shadow box frame, and flanked by two wall brackets holding china figurines, highlights a rich mahogany console table, whose glowing polished surface reflects a graceful china figure and two miniature framed photos. Mrs. Swanson tells us that she especially enjoys

portraying movement in her painting — such as dancers. Two of her pictures have won honorable mention at exhibitions, one a floral in oils and the other a group of ballet dancers.

At this time Mrs. Swanson is being accepted as a member of the Musse'-white Foundation in Beverley Hills, which is composed of artists and interior decorators. This honor comes to her strictly on her own merits and accomplishments rather than because of any extensive training, although she admits having attended an interior decorating class for two semesters.

As may have been gathered by our readers at the beginning of this article, Mr. Swanson's role in this worthy partnership has not been merely that of 'bringing home the bacon', and then sitting complacently back to bask in the aura of his wife's illustrious activities. No, indeed! Apart from the community enterprises they have enjoyed together, he has been usefully busy contributing his own particular talents to his business associates and his country generally.

He has recieved a great deal of publicity in connection with his work with the Toastmasters' International and has been president of a number of clubs, including the Long Beach Exchange club and the Tala Club, a public speaking group. In 1944 during his presidency, the Exchange club was presented with the trophy for 'Service to Youth' program, which was won in competition with 60 other cities, and Mr. Swanson was personally presented with a certificate of award for Civic Service. His numerous lectures on Iceland, given before various clubs, such as the Lions', Kiwanis, American Scandinavian, and Authors' club, and at Round Table conferences, show his wide knowledge of his subject matter, and imaginative presentation. His five

or ten minute speeches given in oratorical contests, are models of conciseness, lucidity and well-arranged information, and bear no resemblance to the 'garrulous verbosity' of some speakers, which is supposed to pass for erudition and inspiration, and indeed, is often mistaken for that by indiscriminating audiences.

On many occasions when he has lectured on Iceland he has been assisted on the program by his cousin Miss Mae Valdis, well-known Los Angeles contralto, who has contributed Icelandic folk songs. When the Long Beach Civic Chorus gave a presentation of Sir Edward Elgar's dramatic Cantata **King Olaf** at Convention Hall, Mr. Swanson gave a talk on the Vikings as a prologue to the performance.

In 1946 Mr. Swanson visited his native country after an absense of 33 years, and we can safely assume that while there he spent some pleasant moments at his favorite game of chess. For he was a recognized chess champion, before he left Iceland in 1913, and also while he lived in Winnipeg.

In 1944 the whole handsome Swanson family was featured in **The Western Woman** a quarterly magazine published in Los Angeles. There is a daughter, Emma Gloria, now Mrs. Paul S. Grandle and a son, Gunnar Raymond Swanson, who served as First Lieutenant with the U.S. Army Air Corps.

A pastel portrait of Mrs. Swanson, painted by Gertrude Orde, former member of the L. B. Art Ass'n and president of the Scandinavian-American Art Society of the West, won first prize at the Los Angeles Friday Morning June Art exhibition in 1949. Mrs. Swanson was introduced at the Art tea when prizes were awarded to the exhibiting artists, and the prize win-

ning portrait was included in the current exhibition of Gertrude Orde portraits at the Jergins Arcade under the auspices of the Art Ass'n.

**ED. NOTE:** The Icelandic Can. is indebted to Mrs. E. S. (Pauline) Shields of Los Angeles for sending us a great deal of material,—newspaper clippings, magazine articles, letters and manuscripts, which made it possible to feature the Swansons in this issue. We also wish to thank Gudny M. Thorvaldson, also of Los Angeles, for additional material.

## Canada Participates In Dedication Of M.S. Gullfoss

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Hon. E. J. Garland, Canadian Minister to Iceland and Norway, representing Prime Minister Louise St. Laurent, attended the dedication ceremony in Reykjavík, Iceland, for the 330-foot M.S. Gullfoss, new ship of the Icelandic Steamship Co., passenger fleet.

Greetings were received from Hon. R. F. McWilliams, K.C., Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, Premier D. L. Campbell, Mayor Garnet Coulter (Winnipeg) and Premier Byron Johnson of British Columbia.

The greetings were delivered by A. G. Eggertson of Winnipeg, who with his wife is visiting Iceland at the invitation of the Icelandic Steamship Co. In memory of his father, the late Arni Eggertson, a former director of the company. Mr. Eggertson presented the ship's captain, Pjetur Bjornsson, with a leather guest book, illuminated by Winnipeg School of Art director, Gisur Eliasson.

Other gifts presented by Mr. Eggertson were: desk set on marble base with pens and bronze bison from the Province of Manitoba; plaque from the City of Winnipeg; and leather cigarette case from Premier Johnson.

More than 15,000 residents of Reykjavík turned out to see the Gullfoss when she docked prior to the formal dedication services.

## Young Cellist Presented With Valuable Cello

★

Erling Bengtson, eighteen-year old talented cellist, has been presented with a coveted instrument,—the 'cello which formerly belonged to Emanuel Feuerman, well known cellist who died in 1942. It is valued at 100,000 krónur (approximately \$7,000 at the present rate of exchange) and the donors were Gregor Piatigorsky, Erling's teacher, Kai Rasmussen, Chicago building contractor, and a musical instrument dealer named Moennig.

Three years ago Erling came to the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, to study with Piatigorsky, under a two-year scholarship from the Musical Club of Reykjavík, Iceland. — The teacher soon recognized the young man's remarkable talents and gave him every assistance and encouragement. Last season Erling was appointed assistant to Piatigorsky at the Curtis Institute. At recitals in the U.S.A. he has received the highest plaudits of critics (see Icel. Canadian, Spring, 1949), and has received offers to play in various cities in Europe. He is on holidays in Denmark at present where he will give a concert at the Tivoli in Copenhagen, August 23. He will also visit Iceland with his mother, Sigríður (Nielsen) Bengtson, who was brought up at Ísafjörður, Iceland, her mother being Þórunn Blöndal, of the well-known Blöndal family of Húnavatnssýsla.

## *Interesting Library At Elfros*

By Lillian T. Sumarlidason

The love of good books is one of the characteristics of the Iclander. Rarely is an account given of travels to Iceland which does not make some mention of finding good reading material in the least-expected places. By contrast, the libraries in many of the homes of Western Canada are all too scant, if any exist at all.

Therefore, it is with wonder and admiration that one enters the home of Mrs. Thruda Goodmundson, of Elfros, Sask., and views her amazing collection of books. Lining the three walls of her reading room, the shelves reach toward the ceiling, holding rare and treasured volumes, gathered together by a discriminating connoisseur.

Mrs. Goodmundson has not acquired these books because of their beautiful bindings nor have they been chosen at random. There is a reason and a purpose for the inclusion of every book in her interesting collection.

No effort has been too great for her if the finding of a desired book was the result. It took seven years of searching to get a first edition of Lord Dufferin's 'Letters From High Latitudes'. Some of her books have come from London, England, or from the New York book-sellers. This constant searching enhances her pleasure in the discovery of a special edition, or a noteworthy publication.

Nor has she kept to one category of subject, for the titles suggest that there is reading of interest with appeal to a variety of tastes. For those, able to read the Icelandic language, there is a large collection of well-worn books, most of them now out of print, for the earliest copies belonged originally to her mother from whom she inherited her love of

good reading. Other well bound Icelandic books are there, and while a list of titles would not be feasible, such names seen are: Steingrímur Thorsteinsson, Guðm. Guðmundsson, Grímur Thomsen, Kristján Jónsson, Gröndal, Matthías Jochumsson, and many others.

Attractively set off in the centre of her varied and extensive Icelandic library is her cherished collection of some fourteen first editions written by her friend, Jóhann Magnús Bjarnason. Of his works, this is possibly the most complete group in existence. There is a copy of his *Töfra kastallinn* (The Magic Castle) which was printed originally in pamphlet form in Winnipeg. To the best of his knowledge, Mrs. Goodmundson's copy is the only one in existence.

It was the custom of Mrs. Goodmundson to pay a visit to his home every Sunday afternoon, for he and his wife spent the closing years of their lives in the little village of Elfros. Many of her books were bought for his use, especially those of Ben Jonsson. It is safe to say that he spent many a happy hour browsing among the printed wit and wisdom of the authors on Thruda's shelves. With his knowledge of books, and publishers, he must have found it a rare privilege to have so complete a library for delving into.

It must also have gladdened his heart to find the care given to his own writings, for as the books published so long ago were being worn by time, Thruda had many of them bound in gold-lettered maroon suede. His personal signature on each of them places greater value on them as collector's pieces.

When acquiring a new book it has been Mrs. Goodmundson's practice to



ask for the author's autograph whenever possible. Consequently, she has what has rarely been obtained, Vilhjalmur Stefánsson's autograph on six of his books found on her shelves.

It is natural that she would want the writings of Prof. Watson Kirkconnell, and each of these has been graciously autographed. Whenever a new book of the late Lord Tweedsmuir was published, it was sent for his inscription. Three books of poems were sent to Iceland for the personal signature of Davíð Stefánsson frá Fagraskógi. She also obtained Gray Owl's name on each of his nature stories, a few weeks before his death; and the name of Sir Gilbert Parker is on his **Donovan Pasha**.

Another interesting group of books found on her shelves proves her discrimination as a collector. They are four in number, each giving an account of the travels in Iceland of a British tourist.

The first of these, tells that Sir Joseph Banks made, in 1771, an extensive survey of every aspect of life in Iceland. His letters report his observations on Civil, Literary, Ecclesiastical, and Natural History, as well as the Geology, Customs, Dress and Manners of the people of Iceland.

When it was published, it in turn influenced another travelling scientist, Wm. Jackson Hooker, F.L.S., who, in 1809, spent the summer on the island, making sharp comments. His book was privately printed, only twenty-five copies being made.

These two books in turn influenced Sir Geo. Stuart MacKenzie to write of his travels in Iceland during the summer of 1810, expressing his interest in the extraordinary natural phenomena, and the awakening of the curiosity of science to that remarkable country.

These were followed by a fourth book, a **Journal of Residence in Ice-**

**land**, 1814 — 1815, by Ebenezer Henderson, covering in a scholarly way its Natural Phenomena, History, Literature, Antiquities, Religion, Character, Customs, and Manners.

That, now, over one hundred years later, these four separate books lie side by side in her library gives it an added, and perhaps unique distinction.

One book, whose dollar value is now into three figures, is a dictionary of Icelandic and English compiled by Richard Cleasby. So complete is it in tracing word roots and derivatives and inflections that any university library would find it a valuable acquisition.

Another over-sized companion is a different type of publication. It is 'Records in the Tower of London', printed in England in 1657 listing the laws, offences and punishments of that day. Amusingly enough, it has had a veritable book worm burrowing its tiny way through the yellowing pages.

Then there are volumes ordered for the use of Mr. and Mrs. Goodmundson's five children during their school years; the Encyclopaedia Britannica, two over-sized copies of Wm. Shakespeare, well illustrated with steel engravings; a rare 1879 edition of H. W. Longfellow; sets of Dickens, Kipling, Riley, Edgar Allen Poe, Hubbard, and many others; anthologies, histories, and poetry.

Also represented in this library are the two women, who by their translations or original writings on the Sagas and Eddas have become recognized as scholars of Scandinavian literature. They are Miss Bertha Philpotts, of Cambridge University, and Miss Margaret Schlauch. Because of their interest in the social background of the Sagas, and the world of the pagan gods they have made available to readers in the English language some



of the excitement of the Viking spirit in an adventurous age, and given us fine examples of the classical literature of Iceland.

Should one wish to read again of the early voyages of the Vikings to the New World, there is the tantalizing story of Guðleifr, a navigator who in the year 1030 was blown off his course to Ireland and landed somewhere on the shores of America. This is told in the **Household History** by Ben J. Lossing, LL.D., and he informs his readers that the dark-skinned natives took the astonished sailors up the beach to their 'white-skinned' chief who "Spoke of them in Icelandic", advising them to leave without delay because of the cruelty of the natives. Then he asked for news of many well-known persons in Iceland, and taking a gold ring from his finger, he asked that Guðleifr present it to Thuridur, the sister of Snorri (Goði). This led them to think that he was none other than Bjorn, a famous Icelandic Bard, who because of his love for Thuridur, had become the rival of her husband, and so had to leave the country about the year 998.\*

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\* This Saga legend of the supposed discovery of Björn **Breiðvíkingakappi** as a 'white chief' among the American Indians, is related in **Eyrbyggja Saga**, and repeated in Guðmundur Kamban's **I See A Wondrous Land**. It tells how the 'white chief', refusing to disclose his name, gave his sword and ring to Guðleifr, asking him to give the sword to Kjartan, the owner of **Fróðá**, and the ring to Kjartan's mother, Thuridur, who had been the wife of Thoroddr (**Skattkaupandi**) at the **Fróðá** estate, at the time when Björn was enamoured with her, and which had led to his exile.

In relating this legend in the **Household History**, the author Ben J. Lossing, has the names of the characters in the story somewhat garbled owing to the fact that he mistakes

Somewhat later in this same history, one reads that Christopher Columbus made voyages in the service of the Portuguese, and in the year 1477 sailed to Iceland and beyond. There he doubtless heard the tales about Eric the Red, and Leif the Lucky, from the sagas in which they were recorded. On his return he was filled with the zeal for undertaking voyages of western discovery. One is intrigued to find that this **Household History** was published in New York in 1878.

As time passes and we may no longer hear the personal accounts from those who themselves took part in the early settlements of our own Canadian West, some of Thruda's books will become increasingly valuable. There is the personal report of the North-West Rebellion of 1885, by Major Boulton, published in 1886, and telling in great detail of the peril, heroism and endurance of the men who fought and attained victory over the rebels. His account is colorful and could provide ample material for some future dramatist, as it rivals the most exciting tales of frontier life across the border. It is interesting to note that in this book, among the list of volunteers in Her Majesty's Loyal Militia there appear the names of a Mr. S. Goodmanson, and J. Julius. Though so newly arrived as immigrants, our countrymen were quick to offer their services in support of law and order.

To specify which section of Thruda's library has the greatest appeal would be difficult. These brief references to the subject material are merely made at random, for the total number of books recorded in her catalog is eight hundred and eighty seven.

This is not the whole story, how-

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Thuridur for the sister of Snorri Þorfinnsson instead of Snorri (goði) Þorgímsson.—Editor.

ever, for knowing the need for reading material in their community, she and her husband John Goodmundson, for many years maintained a general reading library in his Red and White store, at Elfros. There, several hundred books of light fiction, mystery stories, and popular historical novels were borrowed by an appreciative neighborhood. This lending library is now housed in an adjoining room of her home, with the overflow in boxes for want of space.

In building up her noteworthy collection, Mrs. Goodmundson has not only amassed a library beyond monetary worth, but her constant search for good literature has served to develop the many fine traits of her character. The community has taken a great interest in her books, admiring the wide

variety which ranges from small pamphlets to outsize volumes too heavy for easy handling; admiring too, the lovely bindings and marvelling at the diversity of subject matter. Her generous sharing of these valued pieces has earned for her the gratitude of many friends, and she holds an honored reputation in the community, where she has been postmistress for the greater part of her life.

Such a library as hers deserves to be placed where a great many people could have access to it, but whatever the future of her amazing collection, it will remain a monument to her steadfast pursuit of the finer things of life and to her keen enjoyment of the spiritual qualities imparted to her by the thinking minds of the past.

Ed. note: Born in Iceland, Mrs. Thruda (Sigbrúður) Goodmundson is the daughter of Guðvaldur Jónsson Jackson from Sandfelli, Arnarfjörður, Iceland, and his wife Kristín Þorgrímsdóttir from Hámundarstöðum in Vopnafjörður. With their seven children they moved to America (Hensel, N. Dak.) in 1888. Mrs. Goodmundson has been postmistress in Elfros since shortly after she came to the village. Besides being a lover of good books, she makes special efforts to grow a fine garden in a dry climate not kindly to flowers, and is reputed to be a good carpenter. In the pioneer days at Elfros she was not afraid to tackle any repair work or even minor building operations. She is active in the Icelandic Ladies' Aid and the Legion Auxiliary. She still lends books to the townspeople and, to known book lovers she even lends her precious autographed editions.

## News Briefs

**Rosemary Oddson** who just started taking lessons in figure skating last fall won two trophies this winter at the Winnipeg Ice Club. She won the Swanson trophy, for junior championship, and the Rose Bowl for winning the novice competition. Rosemary who has been taking Grade XI, (the accelerated course) is, because of her high standing in her class, exempt from taking Dept. of Education exams, and when her school was closed because of the Red River flood she made plans to visit friends in Vancouver where she will study figure skating for six or

eight weeks with Albert Engers of the Connaught skating club.

Rosemary is also very active in school sports and was getting ready to take part in several events, but the school field day was cancelled because of the flood. She is a daughter of Mrs. Asta Oddson of Winnipeg and the late Leifur Oddson.



**G. F. Jonasson**, president of Keystone Fisheries Ltd. was re-elected president of the Prairie Fisheries Federation at the annual meeting held in April, at the Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg.

## *Pageant On Iceland's Culture*

An unusual program in the form of a pageant: 'The Symbol of Iceland', was presented by the Jon Sigurdson Chapter, I.O.D.E., at a concert at the First Lutheran church, Victor street, March 28, in aid of the Chair of Icelandic in the University of Manitoba.

The pageant, an exquisite miniature historical panorama, depicted in a series of colorful tableaux, the preservation throughout the ages, of Iceland's literature and other cultural traditions and symbolized how Iceland's descendants in Canada and the United States have cherished their cultural heritage, passing it on from generation to generation, to succeed at last in giving Canada a share in this treasured heritage, by establishing a Chair of Icelandic language and literature at the University of Manitoba.

The Jon Sigurdson chapter is one of the founders of the Chair. Mrs. B. S. Benson is the chapter's regent, Mrs. E. A. Isfeld was convener of the committee in charge of the concert, and the pageant was written and directed by Holmfridur Danielson.

As part of the continuity of the pageant several Icelandic songs, solos and duets, were sung by Mrs. Rosa Vernon and Alvin Blondal, accompanied by Mrs. Aida Harte violinist, and Bjorg Violet Isfeld, pianist. A large community choir, composed of members of the choirs of the First Lutheran church and First Federated church, together with several other singers sang the Icelandic National Anthem, 'O, Guð Vars Lands', and O, Canada. During the showing, a commentary was given by Mrs. Danielson with soft background music played by Mrs. Isfeld and Mrs. Harte.

The elegant Icelandic costumes were

off-set by the lovely stage back-drop, a 'Þingvalla' scene painted some years ago by Arni Sigurdson and loaned by the Federated church Dramatic Society. Vari-colored floodlights played upon the scenes with ever changing effects according to the mood of the theme being shown on the stage.

Fifteen persons took part in the pageant, Mrs. Hulda (Guttormsson) Clarke as the 'Fjallkona' and Miss Elene Eylands symbolizing Canada. Others in the cast were: Mrs. Emily Finnbogason, Mrs. H. J. Petursson, Mrs. Olavia Finnbogason, Mrs. Sylvia (Guttormsson) Storey, Misses Margret Petursson, Thora Asgeirson, Gloria Johnson; Messers Wilhelm Kristjanson, Kristjan Sigurdson, Alvin Blondal, Harold Johnson; and little Carlisle and Kerrine Wilson (children of Thelma and Kerr Wilson).

Among the 400 persons attending the program were Dr. A. H. S. Gillson, president of the U. of M., and Mrs. Gillson; Victor Sifton, president of the Winnipeg Free Press, and now chairman of the board of governors of the University, and Mrs. Sifton, together with other members of the Board; Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson, chairman of the Founders' committee of the Icelandic Chair, and Mrs. Thorlakson and other members of the Founders' committee; several members of the Manitoba Legislature and Winnipeg City council; Mrs. S. J. Sametz, president of the Provincial Chapter I. O. D. E., and Mr. Sametz. From the Municipal chapter, I. O. D. E. were Miss M. Hay, secretary and Mrs. E. H. Gardner, regent, with Mr. Gardner.

The concert was an outstanding success both financially and artistically, and in view of the excellence of the



"The Symbol of Iceland", final scene showing Canada holding the scroll which has been presented to her and which symbolizes Iceland's literary heritage.



production it was suggested by Dr. Thorlakson and other leaders interested in the Icelandic Chair, that a permanent record of the pageant be made in colored pictures with accompanying sound track. The finished product would then be presented at concerts in aid of the Chair, in various parts of the country, later to be preserved in the archives of the University with possibly a reproduction sent to Iceland.

This work has now been completed, the sound being recorded by Rev. V. J. Eylands on a wire recorder kindly

loaned by the First Lutheran church. Through the courtesy of A. S. Bardal and N. O. Bardal a fine Icelandic record was included in the recorded production of the pageant. Dr. L. A. Sigurdson was in charge of the pictorial production, and the series of pictures taken have been made into colored slides and synchronized with the sound track. In this way wider audiences throughout the country will be afforded the opportunity of enjoying this very pleasing production of "The Symbol of Iceland".

## News Briefs

Miss Stefania Sigurdson was elected president of the Manitoba Federation of Liberal Progressive Women at the annual meeting held May 28, at the private dining room of the Hudson's Bay store, Winnipeg. Miss Sigurdson has for many years taken a leading part in the activities of the Federation. She is the daughter of Mrs. Thorbjorg Sigurdson of Riverton and the late Johannes Sigurdson, and is a sister of Dr. L. A. Sigurdson of Winnipeg.

★

A. G. Eggertson, K. C. was named president April 13, of the Winnipeg South Centre Liberal Association.

Dr. Thorbergur Thorvaldson received the honorary degree of LL.D. from the University of Saskatchewan this spring.

★

Miss Joan Bergman well known figure skater of Winnipeg, was paired with Frances Abbott in the senior pairs event at the Winnipeg Winter Club championships last March. They showed fine precision in winning this event. Miss Bergman, who is the daughter of John and Oddny Bergman (formerly of Arborg, Man.) has also been very busy this winter performing as guest artist at various ice carnivals held in Manitoba country towns.

## THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

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## *Icelandic Paintings Exhibited In Springville, Utah*

For exhibition at the annual Springville National Art show, two Icelandic canvasses arrived directly by air from Iceland. They are: "Hooded Glacier", by Jón Thorleifsson and "The Forest at Húsafell" by Ásgrímur Jónsson.

came a subscriber to **The Icelandic Canadian** and perused the volume **Iceland's Thousand Years**. His contacts in Iceland and correspondence with relatives and friends there resulted in having the Air Minister of



Two interesting canvasses from Iceland: "Hooded Glacier" by Jon Thorleifsson, and "The Forest at Husafell", by Asgrimur Jónsson, ready to be hung at the Springville Art Exhibition by the art curator, Oliver Parson.

To John Y. Bearson is given much of the credit for obtaining these two prominent paintings for hanging at the exhibit. His interest in Iceland has grown steadily, especially since he be-

Iceland send the two paintings directly to the USA via airplane and they were forwarded from New York by air to arrive in Springville in time for the opening of the art exhibit, March 31.

The Springville Herald, The Spanish Fork Press and The Tribune and Desert News gave prominent space to the arrival of the pictures, featuring reproductions of both. Short biographical notes on the artists were also given. The Herald saying:

"**The Forest of Husafell**" (a scene in the interior of Iceland) was painted by Asgrimur Jonsson, one of Iceland's foremost painters. Mr. Jonsson is rather an old man at present, having been born in 1876. When he was 23 years old he left Iceland and journeyed to Copenhagen in 1897, and studied for three years at the National Academy of Art. He went from Copenhagen to Berlin and Dresden, Germany and studied art in both places under prominent teachers. Later he spent two years of study in Italy.

"His pictures hang in several of the European countries in notable galleries. One of his best is hanging in the National Gallery at Copenhagen, Denmark.

"Hooded Glacier (a scene from the Westman Islands) was painted by Jon Thorleifsson. The artist has had a rather varied career. He is at present one of the members of the Althing — (Parliament of Iceland). He, like Jonsson, early left Iceland and studied abroad. He studied for a few years in Copenhagen and then went to Paris and studied under prominent artists. He has paintings in several countries, but one mural that would be of interest to us in America and one which gave him quite favorable comment was at the Icelandic Division of the New York's World Fair in 1939. This covered an area of 7 feet by 118 feet. Thorleifsson was born in 1891 and is at present president of the Icelandic Art Association".

The art conscious town of Springville, Utah (population about 7,000)

has been called "the art centre of the Rockies". It has its own permanent High School Art Gallery, which had its beginnings in 1903 when the artist, John Hafen, a resident of Springville, presented to the High School, one of his own paintings: **The Mountain Stream**, and at the same time enlisted the interest of other Utah artists in building up a collection of art in the school. In 1907 at the first unveiling exercises held in the town, sixteen paintings by prominent Utah artists were presented.

The public gave the project enthusiastic support and the high school students raised funds each year by various sales and entertainments. In 1921, through the efforts of the principal of the high school, a spring salon was instituted and each April since that time an exhibition of the works of American artists has been held. Each annual exhibit attracts from two hundred to two hundred and fifty paintings by state, national and internationally famous artists. Paintings from nearly every state in the Union, as well as from France, Spain, Holland, Switzerland, Japan and Canada have been displayed.

From this annual exhibition at least one painting is purchased each year to become part of the school's permanent collection. This collection which now includes 200 paintings, valued at \$150,000 was recently described in an eastern publication as "the largest and, in quality, the best collection of art in a high school in the United States". The collection also has some very fine pieces of sculpture.

A recent survey revealed that during the last fifteen years 2,839 paintings have been exhibited, the works of foremost artists representing 38 states in the Union, and annual attendance at the

showing has reached as high as fifty thousand visitors.

This year, 1950, the Springville art show was more than just an annual exhibition, as it marked the opening event in the Springville Centennial festival, and special efforts were made to give it every advantage. And it meant something very special to the Icelandic Association of Spanish Fork as well as all those of Icelandic descent in Springville, who were all very interested in the two Icelandic paintings and who attended the opening of the show in a body. They were grateful to Mr. Bearnson for his enterprise in getting the pictures. A third canvas was prominently displayed at the exhibition, by courtesy of Mr. Bearnson. This was **Olive Grove**, by Salvatore Maggioro, of Sicily. "This picture", Mr. Bearnson tells us, "was a gift to us from a family we have corresponded with in Bagheria, Sicily since 1944. It is an oil canvas, 27 by 44 inches, a beautiful country landscape. The art-

ist who did the painting is a friend of the family that we correspond with. And he won the International Exposition at Venice, Italy in 1936. He also won the International Show at Palermo, Sicily more recently. We feel very honored to have had this beautiful painting sent to us as a gift for our home", says Mr. Bearnson, "and it makes me very happy to have been instrumental in getting these fine pictures from Iceland. I have heard many laudatory comments on them. One prominent Utah artist said to me of Jonsson's canvas, "I think it is very strong canvas, the artist has captured the unusual setting of the mountain, with the forboding skies and the approach of the storm upon it, with an unusual display of light piercing the stormy firmament." **H. D.**

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**Credits:—** Information on Paintings by courtesy of John Y. Bearnson. Cut by courtesy of The Springville Herald.

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## Elected President

**Dr. R. Beck** was elected president of the newly formed Grand Forks chapter of The American Association for the United Nations. Dr. Beck has given

lectures on the United Nations for various organizations and was one of the organizers of the Grand Forks Chapter.

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## *Abiding Interest In Music*

When Bjorg Violet (Hermanson) Isfeld was elected president of the Manitoba Registered Music Teacher's Association in April of this year it was a just tribute to her ability as an executive and her long and efficient service to that organization. She has been an active member of its Winni-



**Mrs. E. A. Isfeld**

peg Branch since 1925, has served on the executive for many years, and was its president for two years, 1945 and 46.

During her tenure of office she inaugurated the Community Carol Service held in the Civic Auditorium, with the participation of close to 3,000 members of Winnipeg's Junior and Senior High School choirs and the Schools' Orchestra. The City has given the use of the Auditorium free for this enterprise, the first performance being given during Christmas week, 1945, as an expression of thankfulness that the

war was over, with Civic and Provincial dignitaries as Patrons.

Under her direction, also started the (music) Teachers' Concerts, given at the annual meetings of the M. R. M. T. A., the proceeds of which formed the nucleus for a Music Scholarship fund which has been growing ever since. Thus began the annual scholarship contest of the Ass'n, now in its 4th year, the winners being determined through a series of musical programs given during the year. During the past year 66 students of piano, violin and voice competed, and a total of over \$400 will be given in awards, at the final program scheduled for June 17.

In the pioneer years and for many years thereafter, the children of the settlers had meagre chances of indulging in any form of artistic endeavors and, because of poverty and extreme isolation from all contacts with the culture of the wider world: :

"Full many a flower was born  
to blush unseen

And waste its fragrance on the  
desert air."

But the Hermanson children were somewhat more fortunate in this respect as they lived in the town of Selkirk, and in close proximity to the city of Winnipeg. In the home there was, too, that certain atmosphere of culture and refinement which characterized so many of the Icelandic homes. The father and mother, Herman and Guðrun Snjolaug Hermanson were both musical, Herman having a good tenor voice, was much in demand as soloist at community gath-

erings. There were pleasant twilight sessions in the home when all the children sang with their parents, and soon this humble dwelling acquired an organ. The children were even more jubilant when this was replaced by a piano.

Some of to-day's reluctant music students who have to be cajoled or bribed to practise their lessons, may not believe that this precious piano did not have the capacity to accommodate all the eager Hermanson youngsters. Perhaps it was in protest that two of the sisters Aida, (now Mrs. Hart), and Rosa, (Mrs. Vernon) took up the study of violin and voice, respectively, for "you simply could not pry Bjorg away from the piano " they say. This is not to be regretted, however, as Rosa became an accomplished soprano soloist and Aida has never given up her violin practice, though a busy housewife with four children. The three sisters have many a time given real pleasure to audiences in the Icelandic community of Winnipeg with their joint recitals.

Throughout the years, while giving loving care to her home, her husband, Eric, and their only daughter, May, (married to Dr. Dallas Medd, of Winnipeg), Bjorg Isfeld has taught large classes of piano pupils. She was for a number of years organist at First Lutheran Church and conductor of its two choirs for two years. She has also given her services to other organizations, notably the Jon Sigurdson chapter, I.O.D.E., having served as its War Service convener throughout the war years. This was a time-consuming task which she handled with efficiency and thoroughness. Many were the arduous evenings we spent in her home during the Christmas seasons packing, labelling and sending sometimes upwards of 300 parcels for service person-

nel overseas. But the work was lightened by the joy of good comradeship, the generous hospitality of Bjorg Isfeld and the inevitable cup of coffee! For her work in this field the chapter honored Mrs. Isfeld with a life membership in 1946.

Mrs. Isfeld has attended conventions of the Can. Federation of Music Teachers' Associations in various parts of Canada. At the Victoria, B. C. convention in 1941, she gave a paper on: "The Music of Iceland", which was later published in *The Icelandic Canadian*. At the convention in Toronto, 1946, she attended as Manitoba delegate and was elected to the executive of the C. F. M. T. A., where she has served since.

As delegate and member of the executive she attended the 1948 convention at Banff, Alta., accompanied by these Winnipeg artists who entertained at the convention: Mrs. Irene Thorolfson, violinist; Mrs. Rosa Vernon, soprano, and W. G. Gregory, baritone.

At the time of her appointment to the presidency in April she was serving as convenor of the Winnipeg Branch committee, which was preparing to play host to the 1950 convention of the C. F. M. T. A., but it had to be cancelled owing to the flood.

When asked if she had any new projects in mind for the M. R. M. T. A., Mrs. Isfeld replied: "I think the recently organized projects will keep us busy, but we are certainly planning to expand the Association, and hope to organize more branches in Manitoba".

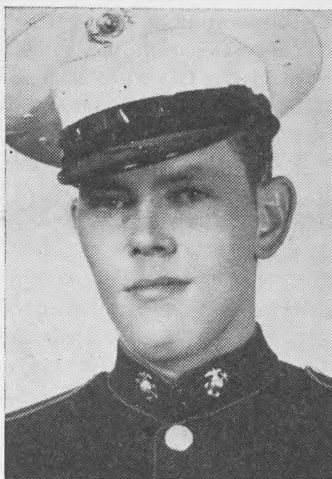
Knowing Bjorg Isfeld's tremendous tenacity of purpose, her sincere attitude to all tasks she sets herself, and her unflinching adherence to duty, we have no doubts that under her capable direction the M. R. M. T. A. will grow and prosper.

H. D.

## WAR SERVICE RECORD



**Cpl. Margaret Jean Weber**



**PFC. Thorgils James Weber**

**CPL. MARGARET JEAN WEBER**—Born at Toronto, Ont., Jan. 11, 1924. Entered the U. S. Marine Corps, Women's Reserve, May 24, 1945. Received boot training at Camp Le Jeune, N. C. Was on active duty until her discharge at Arlington, Va., August 15, 1946.

**PFC. THORGILS JAMES WEBER**—Born at Chicago, Ill., February 23, 1927. Graduated from U.S. Maritime Training Station, Sheepshead Bay, N.Y., August 1944. Served on convoy ships to August 1946. Entered U.S. Marine Corps, Parris Island, S.C., November 10, 1946. Served on active duty until his discharge as Corporal, November 11, 1949.

Daughter and son of Dr. A. J. and Margaret (Halldorson) Weber, Kenosha, Wis.

### M.M.1/c JOHANNES SIMUNDSON

Born at Hensel, N. D., January 27, 1912. Enlisted in the U. S. Navy March 26, 1942. Served in the Caribbean, African and European theatre. Was aboard the Patrol Craft No. 625 duty in the Caribbean and Atlantic. Participated in the invasions of North Africa, Sicily, Salerno, Anzio and Southern Africa. Was awarded a Unit Citation, Good Conduct Medal and authorized to wear the American, European and African theatre ribbons.

Son of the late Johannes and Margaret Simundson, Hensel, N. Dakota.



**M.M. 1/c Johannes Simundson**

**SGT. EGGERT JULIUS ARNASON**

Born in Iceland 1886. He served in the infantry of the Canadian Army in World War I from 1914 to 1918. Was decorated with the Military Medal.

Enlisted in the 13th Field Regiment, Royal Canadian Engineers, September 1939, in Calgary. Embarked overseas 1940. Returned after V.E. Day. Sgt. Arnason is a brother of the late Rev. Guðmundur Arnason.

Son of the late Árni Þorláksson and Helga Kjartansdóttir, Iceland.



Sgt. Eggert Julius Arnason

**GNR. BJORN ALBERT EYOLFSON**

Born at Lunda, Man., November 2, 1919. Enlisted in the Canadian Army April 17, 1941. Was stationed at Portage La Prairie, Camp Shilo and Fort Garry, Man. Embarked overseas December 12, 1941. Served in the United Kingdom and Continental Europe. Landed in France June 30, 1944. Awarded the 1939—1945 Star, France and Germany Star, Defence Medal, Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp, and War Medal 1939—1949. Discharged May 20, 1946.

Son of Mrs. H. von Renesse and the late Bjorn Eyolfson, Arbog, Man.



Gnr. Bjorn Albert Eyolfson

**NEW CANADIAN WINS  
SONG-WRITING CONTEST**

Janis Kalnins is another new arrival to Canada to achieve success and to contribute to the cultural life of this country. Although he has only been in Canada since July 1948, this February he was one of the nine winners in a song-writing contest sponsored by the International Service of the CBC. Mr. Kalnins' contribution was a musical setting for female voices, of the "Bird's

Lullaby", a poem by Canada's Indian poetess, Pauline Johnson.

Janis Kalnins, who spent the war years in a German internment camp, comes from Latvia where he was the director of the Latvian National Opera in Riga for 23 years. He is the composer of a number of orchestral works, one of which was recently performed by the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. Since coming to Canada he has been employed as organist and choir director of a church in Fredericton, N. B.



## *Professor Helgason Honored*

Sigurður Björn Helgason, assistant professor of plant science at Manitoba University, one of our younger professional men, seems to be going places in his chosen field. This winter he was signally honored by being chosen president of Manitoba Agronomists, a society of about 75 professors, extension workers, and research workers, whose common interest is field crops — which is basic to a very large slice of the economy of the West.

"Sig", as he is commonly called by his friends, was born in Hólar-bygð, south of Elfros, Sask., but was raised on a farm in Argyle. In 1931 he graduated from Glenboro High School into a world of gloom and pessimism, where there seemed to be no place for youth. The year 1935 found him at the Manitoba Agricultural College, taking the Diploma Course for young farmers. But so firm a hold did he take of the work that his professor urged him to shift to the Degree course, and got him summer work to help with the expenses.

Upon his graduation in 1939, a job was waiting for the young B. S. A. at the famous Dominion Experimental Farm at Morden, Man. where he remained until 1947 when he was 'lifted' by the University of Manitoba. Here he devoted much of his attention to producing better strains of barley, and of corn. Corn breeding especially captured his imagination and his energies. He saw a vision of the great Corn Belt to the south of us moving up into Manitoba. But our short season and our cold damp springs are unfavorable to all varieties now known to science. To this problem Helgason addressed himself with vigour. Two of the strains he helped to originate at

Morden have now come to the production stage and are attracting great interest among farmers and plant breeders.

In 1942 he was awarded the Masters degree in Agriculture by the University of Minnesota, which he attended for a few months each winter. Now he is getting very close to achieving his Doctorate from the same institution for his work in corn breeding. Many years ago Dr. Saunders, at the Ottawa Experimental Farm, gave the country Marquis Wheat, and so added untold millions to the income of western farmers. When a comparable strain of corn becomes a reality, we may be sure that the name of Dr. Helgason will be linked with it prominently. **H. J. S.**



### **Hearty and Active at Eighty**



After eighty years of an exceptionally active life Jon J. Bidlfell is still a very busy man. He goes to business every day, and takes part in many community activities.

Mr. Bildfell came to Winnipeg with

his father, Jón Ögmundsson in 1888. After three years of whatever work was available he went to business college and later took a 3 year course at the Collegiate, teaching school during the summer months.

In 1897 Jon Bildfell along with many another adventurous young man, caught the gold fever and fared forth to the klondyke, north to the country of fabulous riches and opportunities. Returning to Winnipeg in three years he established a real estate business which he operated for a number of years.

Mr. Bildfell has taken a prominent part in the Icelandic community life of Winnipeg. He has been a very active member of the First Lutheran church and was the editor of the Icelandic weekly newspaper, 'Lögberg' for many years.

Jon Bildfell has all his life been somewhat of a student, and is particularly enthusiastic about anything that pertains to Iceland or Icelanders. In the series of lectures given under the auspices of the Icelandic Canadian Club on the early life of the Icelandic pioneers in this country, he delivered two lectures on Icelandic pioneers in Winnipeg. These have been published in the Icelandic Canadian. Mr. Bildfell is doing further research on this subject at the present time.

On his eightieth birthday May 1, the Icelandic National League honoured Mr. Bildfell with a luncheon at Moore's Restaurant, where a number of friends enjoyed a pleasant time with him and Mrs. Bildfell. Mr. Bildfell is at present secretary of the League, and a former president; he is the only member of the first executive of the League, still serving on the Board.

In 1939 Mr. Bildfell was honoured by Iceland with the Commander of the Order of the Falcon, for his work

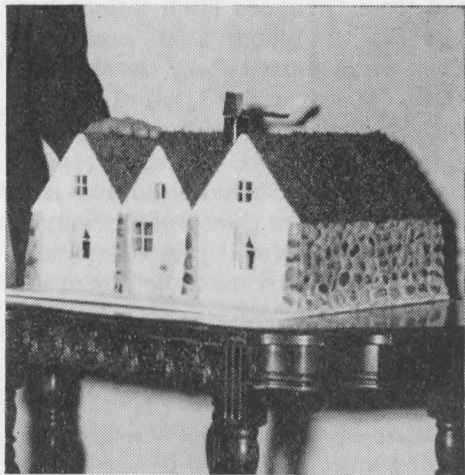
with the Icelandic Steamship company.

The Icelandic Canadian Club and the Magazine staff wish Mr. Bildfell many more happy birthdays. S. E.



## Gudmundur Gudbrandson, Carpenter

The skill and careful workmanship of the Icelandic craftsman is well illustrated in the work of **Guðmundur Guðbrandsson** of Ferndale, Washington. Now retired from active construction work, after a long and busy career as builder, contractor and cabinet maker, he spends much of his time making cabinets and other household



Model of old style Icelandic farm home, on display at Old People's Home, Blaine.

equipment for his daughters' homes. For them and for his friends he makes ornamental pieces for their gardens. Lately he has occupied himself in building replicas of a typical Icelandic farm-home.

It was his wife's love for her homeland and her desire to own a replica of an Icelandic 'sveitabæ', that prompted Guðmundur to build his first model.

Since then he has built three of these models, his last one, recently completed being presented to the Icelandic Old People's Home at Blaine, Washington. It is on display in the large entrance hall of the Home, standing on a lovely carved table, donated to the Home by his daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Harold C. Ahlstedt.

Each model of the old-fashioned Icelandic 'sveitabær' is fashioned with the traditional three gables (burstir), and measures about twenty-two inches across the front and sixteen inches along the side. The side walls are made of real stones set in mortar and lacquered with clear shellac. The front of the house is built of plywood, painted white, with columns of stones and mortar between the divisions. The sectional window panes are of glass, set in wooden frames, also white. The roof is covered with imitation grass which simulates the sod roof with grass growing on it. On the black chimney swings an old-fashioned 'skjól', painted red, — (which was used to prevent the smoke from blowing back into the chimney).

On July 4, this year Guðmundur will be 89 years old, and his eyesight is failing considerably, but such is his skill and sure sense of touch that the intricately carved railings and cornices on his pert bird houses contain no flaws, the inverted curves featured in some of their roofs show a perfect balance and the tiny windows are exactly spaced and correctly proportioned in every detail. As this is written he is working on a beautiful birdhouse to be used in a garden scene at a large flower show in Bellingham this summer.

Guðmundur Guðbrandsson was born at Alptanesi, Gullbringusýsla, Iceland, in 1861.. He received his early training in carpentry in Reykjavík, and came to America in 1884, landing in Port-

land, Maine. He has lived and worked in many places and built some of the houses that touch intimately the history of the Icelanders in Winnipeg and elsewhere. In North Dakota he worked on a large farm, doing carpenter work, blacksmithing and threshing. After coming to Winnipeg one of his first jobs was to build a house for Rev. and Mrs. Jón Bjarnason on Ross Street. Next he worked on many of the buildings in the old Exhibition Grounds.

He was married in 1894 to Elin Sigurðardóttir and in 1900 they moved to Seattle, Wash. Here he built many of the beautiful homes in residential sections of the city. His building operations covered a wide territory, including Everett, Snohomish and Point Roberts, where he built the Icelandic Lutheran church and designed and built the altar, donating it to the church.

In 1925 he built the Ahlstedt home in Bellingham. Mr. and Mrs. Ahlstedt have a garage business on the No. 99 highway near Ferndale, Washington, where their home is at present, and Guðmundur has remodelled a large garage near the Ahlstedt place, into a cosy home for himself and his wife, complete with garden and window boxes. He has always taken a sort of pride in his circular stairways and just at present he is helping to build one for his youngest daughter who lives near Blaine.

An interesting little episode showing the prowess of Guðmundur Guðbrandsson as a young man is told by J. J. Bildfell in his 'Reminiscences' in *Lögberg*, April 6, 1950.

Mr. Bildfell in telling about the popularity of wrestling matches in the Icelandic community during Winnipeg's early days, describes a championship wrestling match held on the corner of Alexander Ave. and Isabel St.,

where a tall muscular Swede had laid low one after another of the best known Icelandic wrestlers. In the midst of the joyous applause coming from the ranks of the Swede's admirers, there stepped forward a slightly-built young Iclander, who seemed to be bubbling over with vitality. Throwing off his coat and cap, he tackled the big Swede and after a few moments of strenuous tactics, he threw the erstwhile champion, thus winning the match! This unforeseen conclusion caused a near riot in the large audience

of several nationalities, where the two opposing camps of Swedes and Icelanders were, of course, in a majority.

The skilful young wrestler was Guðmundur Guðbrandsson and Mr. Bildfell describes him as a man endowed by nature with exceptional manual dexterity and the aptitude to do well whatever task he set his mind to.

"Well, he still has that same indomitable spirit", says his daughter, Mrs. Ahlstedt, "and jovially disclaims that he is getting old!"

H. D.

---

## Trade Union Educational Program

One of the objectives of the Canadian Congress of Labour has been to provide an integrated educational program suited to the needs of the unions and their members.

The annual convention of the Congress in 1946 set up an educational committee and assigned it two specific tasks, first, to acquaint new members of the Congress with its traditions, history and objectives; and second, to train leaders of local unions in the proper conduct of the day-to-day affairs of the union.

This program resulted in a large number of requests for the setting up of regional and district schools and labour institutes, the supplying of vital aids, pamphlets and other materials.

The 1946 conventions took action also with a view to obtaining the co-operation of the universities, both in the matter of outlining courses of study and in providing special instructors. It recommended that short, intensive courses be established to train prospective study group leaders and class instructors.

The Educational Committee serves as a clearing house for all the instructional programs of the major Congress Unions in the United States and Canada.

The experience of the Educational Committee to date has encouraged it to continue and extend its work. Plans are being made to conduct more classes throughout the dominion.

★

The Vocational Training Branch of the Federal Department of Labour recently published a booklet entitled "Vocational Training in Canada". — This booklet was written to remove some of the popular misconceptions, and to give a general survey of the extensive part played by vocational training in the educational systems of the provinces. The booklet also describes federal co-operation with vocational and technical training programs financed in some cases wholly by the dominion government, but in most instances with only liberal grants in aid.



# Scholarship Winners and Graduates of Icelandic Descent At the University of Manitoba

## WINS THREE AWARDS



**Fred Ruppel** graduated in Pharmacy, winning three medals, the University Gold Medal in Pharmacy, Manitoba Pharmaceutical Association Silver Medal and Association Presidents Prize. Son of Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Ruppel, mother Icelandic, the former Hilda Magnusson, daughter of Magnus Magnusson of Winnipeg.

★

**Thor Thorgrimson** was awarded the \$500 Reuben Wells Leonard Fellowship in History at the University of Toronto. During the past year he has been studying for his M.A. Course at United College and the University of Manitoba. This Fall Thor will go to Toronto where he will study Medieval History at the University of Toronto.

He is the son of Mrs. Sigrun Thorgrimson, and the late Rev. Adam Thorgrimson.

★

**Betty Jean McKenty** won an \$80 Isbister Scholarship (Fourth Year Honors). She is the daughter of Dr. Jack McKenty of Winnipeg, and his wife, the former Inga Terlesen.

★

Fourth Year Medicine Isbister Scholarship of \$100, was awarded to **Glen Allan Lillington**, son of Mr. H. A. and Kristjana (Johnson) Lillington, Wpg.

★

### Doctor of Medicine:

**George Johnson**, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Johnson of Winnipeg. After graduation he moved to Gimli to take over the practice of Dr. K. I. Johnson who was appointed to Pine Falls in May. Dr. George Johnson is married to the former Doris Blondal, daughter of Mrs. A. Blondal and the late Dr. Blondal of Winnipeg.

### Bachelor of Arts (General Course):

**Kristrun Bjornson**

**Erlingur Kari Eggertson**, son of Mrs. A. Eggertson and the late Arni Eggertson of Winnipeg.

**Arnold Arthur Isford**, son of Mr. & Mrs. Tom Isford, Winnipeg.

**Laura Evelyn Kristjanson**, daughter of Wilhelm Kristjanson and the late Mrs. Kristjanson, Winnipeg.

**Johanna Thorunn Nielsen**, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Chas. A. Nielsen, Wpg.

**Clare Margaret Lillington**, daughter of H. A. and Kristjana Lillington.

**Bachelor of Science (General Course):**

Roy Francis Bjornson

Paul Henrickson

Eric Valgardur Hjartarson, son of Mrs. Rosa Hjartarson and the late Ivar Hjartarson.

Solmundur E. Solmundson, son of Mrs. Gudrun Solmundson and the late Rev. Johann Solmundson.

**Bachelor of Science (in Pharmacy):**

Ronald Arthur Einarson, son of Mr. & Mrs. Henry W. Einarson, Winnipeg.

**Bachelor of Commerce (Gen. Course):**

Victor Otto Jonasson, son of Mrs. Asa Jonasson and the late Otto Jonasson.

Leonard Earl Edwards, son of Mr. A. Edwards and the late Kristin Bjarnason Edwards, Winnipeg.

**Bachelor of Science (Honors Course):**

George Thomas Isford, son of Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Isford, Winnipeg.

**Bach. of Commerce (Honors Course):**

Robert Hannes Snidal, son of Dr. & Mrs. J. G. Snidal.

**Bachelor of Arts (Honors Course):**

Fridjon Stanley Goodman

**Bachelor of Science (Home Ec.):**

Bertha Solveig Andreason

Lillian Sigridur Byron, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Kari Byron, Lundar, Man.

Geraldine Florence Einarson (Mrs. W. J. Kennedy), daughter of Mr. & Mrs. C. O. Einarson, Winnipeg.

Lenore Emma Johannesson, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Konrad Johannesson, Winnipeg.

Hulda Murine May Sigvaldason

**Bachelor of Science (In Agriculture):**

Philip Lloyd Kjernisted

Norman Peter Wilhelm Peterson

Baldur Rosmund Stefansson

Sveinn Nielson Hallgrimur Westdal, son of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Westdal, Wpg.

**Bachelor of Science (Engineering):**

Asgeir Ingvar Fjelsted, son of Mrs. Ingunn Fjelsted and the late Asgeir Fjelsted of Arborg, Man.

Orville Roy Thorsteinsson

Joseph Norman Stevens, son of Norman and Margaret (Skaptason) Stevens of Gimli, Man.

**Electrical Engineering:**

Frederick Willard Bergman

**Mechanical Engineering:**

---Wilmar Herbert Finnbogason, son of Mr. & Mrs. G. Finnbogason, Winnipeg. Wilmar will take up a position in the Head Office of the Westinghouse Co. of Hamilton, Ont.

Thomas Dalton Johanson

Stefan Thorsteinn Johnson

Clifford Asmundur Marteinson, son of Ernest H. and Ingibjorg Marteinson, Transcona, Man.

**Diploma in Education:**

Gloria Audrey Johnson, B.A., daughter of Mr. & Mrs. J. G. Johnson, Wpg.

Gloria Anne Marie Swanson, B.A.

**Bachelor of Social Work:**

Joyce Gudrun Sigurdson, B.A., daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Sigurdson, Winnipeg.

**Master of Arts:**

Haraldur Victor Vidal, son of Mr. & Mrs. Sigvaldi Vidal, Hnausa, Man.

**Master of Science:**

Patrick Olafsson, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jon Olafsson, Salmon Arm, B. C.

Paul Haraldur Adalsteinn Njall Westdal, son of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Westdal, Winnipeg.

**Diploma in Agriculture:**

Hermann Arason, was valedictorian for his class, son of Mr. & Mrs. Agust Arason, Glenboro, Man.

**Diploma in Music:**

Gloria Olive Sivertson, B.A., received her Diploma in Education in 1949 and this year completed her Associate in Music course at the U. of M. (Piano-forte Performer). During the year Miss Sivertson also taught Music, Mathematics and English at Luxton School, Winnipeg. She leaves shortly for Toronto where she will continue her musical studies during the summer. She is the only daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Peter J. Sivertson of Winnipeg.

Margaret Helen McKeen, Licentiate in Music, Manitoba (Organ). Daughter of Mr. & Mrs. R. W. McKeen, her mother was formerly Kristin Thorvaldson, daughter of Thorleifur Thorvaldson.

**Certificate in Nursing:**

Stefania Lifman, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Thor Lifman, Arborg, Man.

**Icelandic Nurses** graduating from the Winnipeg General Hospital were:

Lilja G. Isfeld

Doreen Sigurdson, daughter of Mr. &

Mrs. G. H. Sigurdson, Winnipeg. She received the H. D. Sellers scholarship of \$500 and the award for citizenship presented by the Saskatoon Chapter.

Sohpie May Arngrimson, received Honorable Mention.

Dorothy May Henrikson, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. R. Henrikson, Selkirk.

★

**Wins at Festival**

In the four-day Musical Festival in Victoria, B. C., the winner of the Bach Piano Solo Class was Wilma Joy Johnson, her marks were 85 and 88. She was also chosen to perform at the final concert of the Festival. Wilma is the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. John (Kelly) Johnson, formerly of Winnipeg.

★

**Medalist**

Emily Goodmanson won the Governor-General's Medal this year at Central Collegiate, Selkirk, Man. She is the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. G. Goodmanson, Selkirk, Man.

★

**Awarded Merit Pin**

**Dorothy Kristjanson**, Gordon Bell School, Grade XII graduate, was one of three from her class to be awarded the schools Merit Pin for outstanding proficiency and participation in school activities. For the past year she was secretary of the Student Council, member of the Gilbert and Sullivan opera group, and member of the school's volleyball and swimming teams. During

1948-49 she was a member of the T. Eaton Co., Junior Fashion Council. She has been appointed one of the City Parks Board playground supervisors for the summer. Her sister, Laura Evelyn (see Graduates) is serving her second season as playground supervisor. They are daughters of Wilhelm Kristjanson of Winnipeg, and the late Mrs. Verda Viola Kristjanson.

## Saskatchewan Graduates

The following students of Icelandic extraction graduated from the University of Saskatchewan at the Spring convocation, May 12, 1950:

**Bachelor of Arts:**

Anna Asrun Asgeirsson, Mozart.

Thordis Adalheidur Asgeirsson, Mozart; with distinction in the general course and winning the Honors Bursary in Biology, which is awarded to the student standing highest in the special course.

Gudrun Emily Gislason, Wynyard.

Peter Thor Guttormsson, Watrous.

**B.Sc. (Electrical Engineering):**

Kristjan Marteinn Eyjolfson, D.F.C., Leslie, Sask.

**B.Sc. (Pharmacy):**

Linda Noreen Josephson, Saskatoon  
Russell Barnard Helgason, D'Arcy.

John McRae Thorlacius, B.A., Kur-  
oki, Sask., was awarded the Certificate  
in Education.

Howard Wesley Baldwin, B.A., completed the specialist's course in chemistry with High Honors and was awarded the Thorvaldson Scholarship.

## U. of B. C. Graduates

**Margaret Anne Stevens**, B.A. (U. of M., 1949) graduated in Dietetics from Vancouver General Hospital, Vancouver.

er. Daughter of Norman K. and Margaret (Skaptason) Stevens, Gimli, Man.

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## GREETINGS TO OUR READERS

The Icelandic Canadian brings a message of thanks to all its readers who literally swamped us with letters during the period of the flood. It is impossible to answer individually all our many kind friends who so thoughtfully showed their deep concern for our well-being.

We assure you that all is well with us, as most of the staff is fortunate enough to live in sections of the city that 'were high and dry'. Two members had their basements badly flooded, and consequently suffered a good deal of inconvenience. Most of us worked in the canteens, at the Red Cross Evacuation centre, and on the dikes, or made ourselves useful in other ways. Naturally all work on the magazine was held up for three weeks, and this made it impossible for the editor to fulfill her promise of going to Mountain, North Dakota to train the children's choirs for the Icelandic organization 'Baran'. This was greatly to be regretted.

The city is rallying magnificently after this bitter blow, and the home owners have shown marvellous faith and courage, not to mention all the tremendous work that has gone into cleaning up after the flood. The rehabilitation work in the valley is progressing too, although more slowly of course.

Our fair city is still a good place to live in and some provision will be made against such catastrophes in the future!



From the Straits of Belle Isle, the Great Lakes—St. Lawrence waterways system extends inland for 2,225 miles; about one eighth of the distance around the world at the latitude of Cornwall, Ontario. The western end of

the system in Canada, at Fort William, is at the very heart of the continent, nearly half way between Cape Breton and the Pacific.



Canada's civilian labour force in March this year totalled 5,108,000 persons, including 101,000 in Newfoundland. This compares with 4,899,000 in March last year for the nine older provinces only. This indicates, excluding Newfoundland, an increase in the civilian labour force of 108,000 over a year ago.



The memory of Canadian soldiers killed at Dieppe in 1942 is to be honored by a commemorative plaque to be erected in the Cathedral of the French city. This is in addition to other monuments erected in the area of the famous raid to the memory of the more than 900 Canadians killed there. The city has also paid tribute to their heroic deeds by changing its coat of arms to include a background of maple leaves.



## Student 'Boners'

NEW YORK — Interested in nuggets of misinformation? Take a look at these little gems — "boners" made by high school students in recent New York state examinations.

"Salt Lake city is a place where the morons settled."

"Two French explorers of the Mississippi were Romeo and Juliet."

"A skeleton is a person with his insides out and his outsides off."

That's just a few of the many hundreds of fantastic answers found on exam papers. They were culled by the division of examination and testing of the New York State Education Department.

### Claim to Distinction

The following paragraph is from a memorable address given a few weeks ago:

"With the monstrous weapons man already has, humanity is in danger of being trapped in this world by its moral adolescents. Our knowledge of science has clearly outstripped our capacity to control it. We have too many men of science; too few men of God.

★

At the end of 1949, lending institutions in Canada had loans totalling \$1 billion invested in real estate in this country. This represents 23 per cent of all total admitted assets owned by Canadian lending institutions, which are valued at around \$4.5 billion.



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